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Problem Solving and Decision- Making Report – T3G2

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Introduction

Problem-solving and decision-making processes are significant within real-world businesses as it establishes processes in order to mitigate obstacles and complex set of problems that hinder reaching strategic goals (Dosi, Hobday and Marengo, 2017). The report will identify the complex problem of staff shortages and heavy workload with an organisational focus. This will be solved using alternative solutions and analysing each of the solutions using a decision-making matrix. In this report, the feasible solution will be actualised using an implementation plan, communication strategies and relevant monitoring and reviewing techniques.

Overview of the complex problem

Most businesses invest heavily in hiring, managing, and developing their employees because of how valuable they are to the company's success. As a result, staffing levels have an impact on a wide range of processes within an organization (Inegbedion et al., 2020). Some of the reasons why workers decide to leave their current jobs are because of better job opportunities, higher pay, and more pleasant work environment. These kinds of conditions lead to a shortage of staff, which, in turn, puts an undue burden on the teammates. When workers are overburdened, the output of their efforts inevitably suffers. Global labor markets in 2020 were severely impacted by the pandemic. Directly or indirectly, the COVID-19 pandemic's economic repercussions have caused millions of people to lose their jobs or be forced to accept lower pay (Bonacini, Gallo and Scicchitano, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic is making things even more unequal than they were before. There appears to be a lack of firm commitment on the part of many companies when it comes to flexible working, despite the fact that these companies are aware of the requirement to adapt.

Analysis of the identified problem

The fishbone diagram enables determining the root cause in quality assurance. This tool is used here to determine and address the issues related to the staff shortage and heavy workload (Tinggi et al., 2021).

Materials: Managing paperwork and looking for information consumes a disproportionate amount of employees' time, which could be better spent doing actual work. That increases the time spent at the office and stresses out workers who have deadlines to meet. Staff

turnover is possible if there is no information manual for guidance on maintaining health in the workplace and a lack of clinical protocol adherence to the Covid 19 pandemic.

Equipment: cause of staff turnover is the lack of training for new hires. With no room for development, employees are less invested in their work and are therefore more likely to quit, resulting in a higher turnover rate and increased workload for those who remain. Insufficient workers may exist due to a lack of drive, negativity, or ignorance on the job (Carnevalea and Hatak, 2020).

Method: Problems, such as work shifts and a lack of defined "on" and "off" days, can negatively impact a company's growth and lead to employee turnover if the proper management isn't in place.

People: Employees are a company's most valuable resource. So, the lack of available workers may be a direct result of the improper management of these individuals. An increasing number of workers are leaving their jobs or getting fired as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic's impact on the economy. The quality of work may suffer as a result of this reduction in personnel (UNICEF, 2020).

Measurement: The firm's dedication to completing projects on time, completing them accurately, and employing a variety of performance metrics have all contributed to a decrease in the labour shortage.

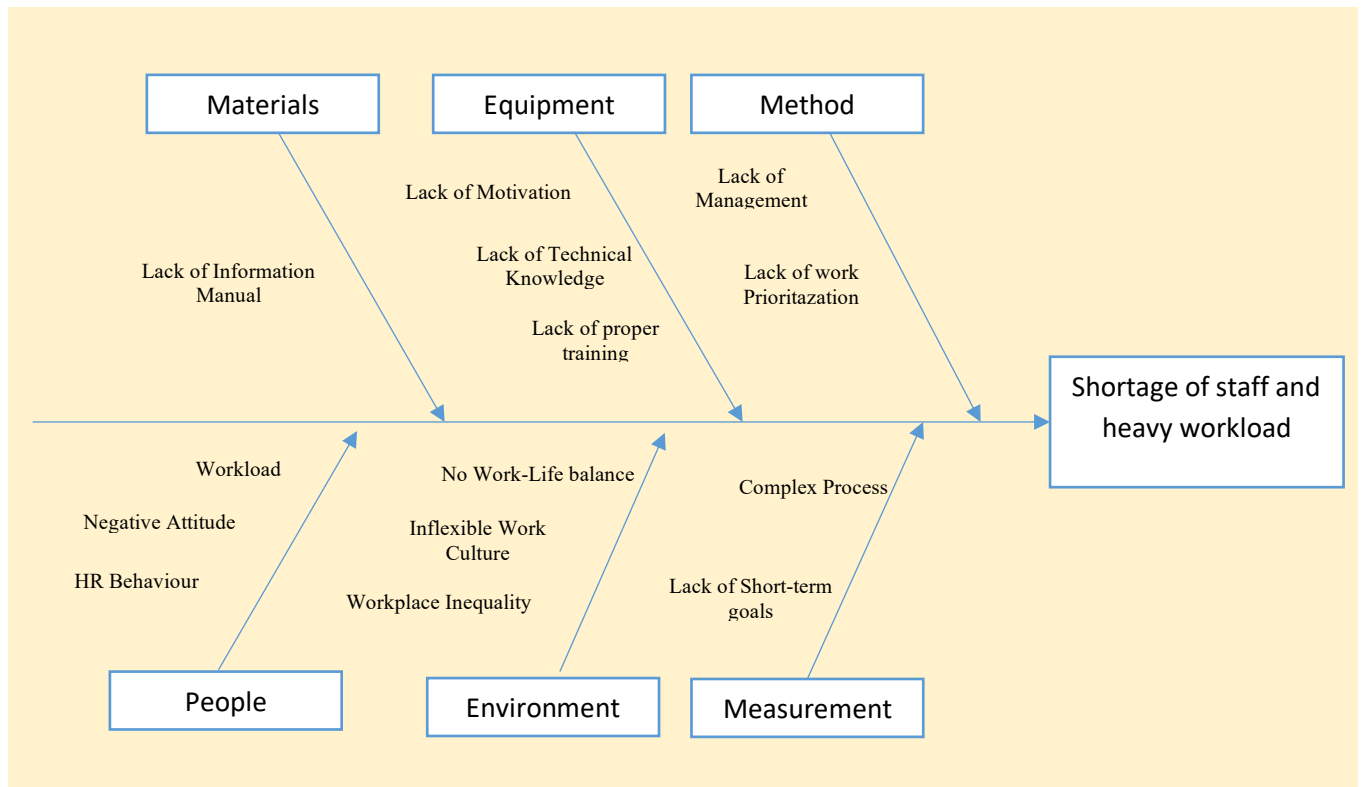


Figure 1: Fishbone Analysis on Shortage of staff and heavy workload

Source: Self

Environment: Most employees choose a company because of the benefits it offers them in terms of work-life balance, workplace fairness, and the ability to set their own hours. The likelihood of an employee leaving their current position due to dissatisfaction with the work environment is higher in such a setting (Lonska et al., 2021).

Alternative solutions to the problem

There are various alternative solutions that could be applied by the organisation to overcome the problem of shortage of staffs and heavy workload in the long run. One such alternative solution is the up-gradation of recruitment practices by collaborating with employment agencies. The collaboration would enable the organisation to gain an uninterrupted supply of staffs to manage gaps and achieve organisational performance and productivity (Chernenko et al., 2020). The organisation through the collaboration would not be required to spend additional time on posting recruitment ads on social media and company website and rather focus on conducting a cost-effective staff retention strategy to reduce workload.

The second best alternative to the problem is the creation of a flexible working environment. This is an appropriate solution keeping in mind to offer flexibility and relaxation to workers employed in long shifts (Davidescu et al., 2020). Organisations should offer flexible working arrangements for employees by offering them the freedom to work from the office or home or full or part-time to reduce excessive workload and retain back employees.

The third possible alternative to the problem of staff shortage and heavy workload can be training and development. The organisation should consider improving its existing training process by providing equal opportunities for both male and female employees to upgrade their skills and knowledge to attain career development (Akba, Saudi and Sinaga, 2021).

Decision-making techniques to select the best possible solutions

The alternative solutions to overcome the problem of staff shortage and heavy workload within the organisation have been achieved by incorporating the decision-making process. There are seven stages through which solutions to the organisation are achieved (Panpatte and Takale, 2019).



Figure 2: Decision-Making Process

Source: Self

Identifying Decisions –The first stage of the decision-making process is where problems related to staffs shortage and heavy workload needs to be identified through the development of specific goal and objectives (Panpatte and Takale, 2019).

Acquiring Relevant Information – This step of the decision-making process is where market research needs to be carried out to evaluate the impact of staff shortage and heavy workload on the performance of the organisation.

Alternative Solutions – This stage is where an organisation needs to develop new ideas and solutions to tackle staff shortages and heavy workloads. Brainstorming, attributed listing and mind-mapping are used to develop alternative solutions (Al Mutairi, 2015).

Weighing of Evidence – This is where an organisation needs to measure the effectiveness of alternative solutions identified from meetings based on its achievement level to manage staffs shortage and heavy workloads. The solutions identified must adhere to Employment Rights Act 1996. Equality Act 2010 and Employment Relations Act 1999 (McLeod and McLaren, 2016).

Selection of Alternative Solution – In this step, the organisation needs to select the best possible alternative adhering to principles of the Employment Rights Act 1996 and Equality Act 2010 to manage staff shortages.

Action – The organisation needs to develop an action plan to make sure that recruitment processes are successfully carried out using the selected alternative to manage staff shortages and heavy workloads. The impact and outcomes of the solution also need to be assessed within the action plan (Vacher et al., 2011).

Reviewing of Decision – The selected alternative solution needs to be critically analysed by measuring its benefit by managing the issue of staff shortage quickly to overcome the heavy workload. If the solution selected is not beneficial, then a new solution needs to be derived instantly.

Furthermore, it should also be noted that the decision-matrix technique can be used to select the best possible solution to manage the problem of staff shortage and heavy workload in the

organisation (Yener, 2019). The solutions derived can be scored (1-10) based on their weightage and importance to the organisation.

	Flexibility	Viability	Cost	Speed	Scores
Weighted Importance	1	2	2	2	
<i>Collaboration with employment agencies</i>	7	5	4	8	24
<i>Flexible working environment</i>	4	3	7	5	19
<i>Training and development</i>	3	4	6	2	15

Table 1: Decision-Matrix

Thus, based on the completion of the decision matrix, it can be said that all three solutions are measured on the grounds of flexibility, viability, cost and speed. The assessment of all the solutions indicates that the solution of “Collaboration with employment agencies” has scored the highest score of 24 as compared to the other two solutions. The flexibility, viability and speed of the selected solution can benefit the organisation to fasten the recruitment process and manage employee gaps to reduce the heavy workload on existing employees. The cost associated with the selected solution is less compared to others thereby making it the cost-effective solution to manage staff shortages and achieve a high level of productivity.

Implementation plan of the solution

Implementation planning is crucial for attaining project success and is based on the ability to outline the tasks, identify personnel and resource and document the timeline for the completion of the project (Levitt, 2011). In regards to the work-based solution identified as

feasible for the organisation, the implementation plan for employment agencies' collaboration is set out as below:

Define Goals/Objectives- The goal is to accomplish a recruitment and retention strategy by collaborating with three employment agencies to narrow the gap in staffing in the organisation by 80%.

Milestones- The project has been set up to collaborate and finally retain the staff for the organisation to narrow the shortage and also relieve the staff from the heavy workload. The milestone for the organisation to collaborate with employment agencies in the implementation phase is provided below:

Task	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Sorting employment agencies						
Agreements with 3 employment agencies						
Candidate profiling						
Applicant tracking system						
Final recruitment						
Employee Induction						

Allocate Resources- The purpose of the implementation plan is to allocate adequate resources such as time, money and personnel in order for the collaboration to be conducted successfully. In this regard, 6 weeks of contract would be established with the employment agencies. Further, £2400 would be set as the budget for contracting placement with the agencies. Personnel would be appointed for the implementation plan with set responsibilities.

Designating team member responsibilities- The designated implementation team would comprise employment agency representatives, company owner, financial manager, human resource manager and executives. The role of the employment agency representatives would

be to conduct the recruitment process and screen candidates for further candidate profiling at the organisation. The company owner would be assigned the role of acknowledging the outsourced recruitment process in association with the financial manager who would allocate funds for the process. Further, the human resource manager and executives would conduct the candidate profiling, application tracking, final recruitment and employee induction process (Jepsen and Grob, 2015).

Metrics for Success- To measure the success of the project, the Offer Acceptance Rate would be assessed to compare the number of candidates who appeared for the profiling and recruitment process from the employment agencies and the number of candidates who accepted the offer with their successful joining (Harold et al., 2016).

Adaptation- In case of changes to the plan such as in poor Offer Acceptance Rate, the organisation would either renew agreements and contracts with employment agencies or terminate the contract and undergo agreements with new employment agencies.

Evaluating Success- On a monthly basis, the employee attrition rate would be assessed along with the cost to fill the vacancies to evaluate the progress and reports would be submitted to the company owner.

Communicating plan to stakeholders

Stakeholders constitute an important part of business as they are directly responsible for positively or negatively impacting the overall decision-making process of the organisation (Benn, Abratt and O'Leary, 2016). Thus, in order to maintain equilibrium in information sharing, it is necessary to select the best possible communication strategies such as meeting wherein weekly meetings with stakeholders should be done to communicate progress made in implementing the best possible solution to overcome the issue of staff shortage and heavy workload (Ihlen, 2012). The newsletter can also be considered an effective communication process between organisations and stakeholders (Prinsloo, 2018). Regular emails containing newsletters should be mailed to stakeholders on progress and achievements to reduce staff shortage and heavy workload in the organisation through successfully hiring from employment agencies.

Monitoring and Review techniques for successful implementation of the solution

The monitoring and reviewing techniques for the successful implementation of the solution could be carried out using the feedback mechanism system and internal audits. In this regard, an independent investigation committee would be formed by the organisation to assess the efficacy of the collaboration with employment agencies (Heller, 2017). Considering the aspect of leadership, the reports of the reviews would be submitted to the organisational leaders which would take the form of survey feedback from the human resource executives and employment agencies. The monitoring would be conducted using the Balance Scorecard model where the solutions would be reviewed weekly to implement future changes and also ensure that factors such as compensation, employee wellness and employee feedback systems are in place to reduce staff shortage and heavy workloads (Bostan and Grosu, 2011).

Conclusion

Employee shortage and increased workload are both signs that the COVID-19 pandemic is still having an impact on the company. The Fishbone analysis is being used to determine the root causes of the current staffing crisis and to implement solutions. We can take effective measures to avoid this if we focus on the causes rather than the effects. The Decision-making process and decision-matrix have been applied to empower the organisation to select and implement the solution of collaborating with employment agencies as the feasible option to manage the problem of staff shortage and heavy workload.

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